

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held in the Council Chamber, St. Richard's House, Victoria Square, Droitwich Spa on **Monday 27 January 2020** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor WT Moy (Mayor)
Councillor RG Beale
Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry
Councillor DM Craigie
Councillor G Duffy
Councillor NR Griffiths
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor A Humphries
Councillor AH Laird
Councillor DJ Morris
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor CM Murray

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillors Mrs K Fellows, J Grady & AM Sinton.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were no questions received.

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246 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

247 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2019

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 16 December 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

248 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy reported that he had attended various Festive Events in the Christmas and New Year period. These special occasions included the Dorset House Care Home Christmas Lunch, and also sherry and mince pies with the Residents on Christmas Day morning. One Lady Resident at Dorset House is 101 years old this year. The Heritage Centre Volunteers and Staff Christmas Lunch on 20 December 2019 at the Old Cock Inn on Friar Street was another very enjoyable function and was well supported. Councillor Moy expressed appreciation to the Heritage Managers and all Volunteers for organising the lunch. The Old Cock Inn was acknowledged as having provided an excellent venue, meal and hospitality. Councillor Moy mentioned that the pub was under new management and is highly recommended.

249 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

The Mayor welcomed Mr Mike Lambden representing the Neighbourhood Plan Group who delivered a brief presentation, *[the narrative for which is attached]*. Details circulated to all members comprised the presentation copy slides, a constitution document version 1.1 dated January 2020 and a “Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan – Project Initiation Document”.

Following the presentation there were no questions arising. Councillor A Humphries then read out the following motion.

“That this Council vests delegated powers in Councillors Humphries for the purposes of approving the contents of communications to engage the community of Droitwich Spa to take part in the formation and delivery of a Neighbourhood Plan for our Town. This will be through communications with the press and local town groups and will also involve the setting up of public meetings to discuss the Plan and the ways forward. This will incur no direct cost to the Town Council save for a possible £200.00 just for purposes of advertising because, as you will have seen from the Project Initiation Document presented to the Town Council this evening, this request is part of Phase 1 of the project which is about community involvement and not direct finance and costings which comes in Phase 2. It was noted that the £200.00 mentioned would be applied for from the Grants Committee rather than be taken from the overall Council Budget”.

Through the Mayor the Town Clerk requested permission to speak on the matter which was granted. The Town Clerk expressed concern that the motion put forward by Councillor Humphries did not accord with the Town Council resolution of September 2018 to suspend work on the Neighbourhood Plan project from that time. To this effect it was explained that the Town Council had requested on several occasions for a detailed business plan, a supporting full costing for the project and details of the Group membership in order to gauge deliverability for future consideration. To date this information has not been provided. Furthermore the modular approach to costing referred to in the Project Initiation Document would not enable the Town Council as the Statutory Body to make a suitable informed decision within the annual budget, estimates and precept setting process. For these reasons the Town Clerk put forward his professional recommendation that the proposed motion should not be considered at this time. The Mayor asked that Members consider the proposal and also the professional advice from the Town Clerk and to put to the vote. The Motion was seconded by Councillor CM Murray with 12 votes in favour and 2 against.

RESOLVED That the motion put forward by Councillor A Humphries be accepted as follows and the advice of the Town Clerk dismissed.

“That this Council vests delegated powers in Councillors Humphries for the purposes of approving the contents of communications to engage the community of Droitwich Spa to take part in the formation and delivery of a Neighbourhood Plan for our Town. This will be through communications with the press and local town groups and will also involve the setting up of public meetings to discuss the Plan and the ways forward. This will incur no direct cost to the Town Council save for a possible £200.00 just for purposes of advertising because, as you will have seen from the Project Initiation Document presented to the Town Council this evening, this request is part of Phase 1 of the project which is about community involvement and not direct finance and costings which comes in Phase 2. It was noted that the £200.00 mentioned would be applied for from the Grants Committee rather than be taken from the overall Council Budget”.

250. HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM REFURBISHMENT PROPOSALS

The Town Clerk reported that Pursuant to minute reference 107 of the meeting of the Emergency Committee which took place on 2 September 2019 to consider further arrangements and options for the project. To receive an update from the Town Clerk that the anticipated presentation from Mr Richard Marshall- Hardy of Marshall - Hardy & Associates has now been deferred until a later date in 2020, possibly Full Council on 20 April or 15 June 2020. This is to accord with the necessary financial limitations and precept scope for the forthcoming Municipal Year (2020/2021). The current outlook is to make more informed decisions for the Heritage Centre project as the year progresses in order to enable financial consideration as part of the 2021/ 2022 budgets, estimates and precept setting arrangements during November 2020. A connected key consideration is to consolidate and achieve the recruitment, appointment and induction processes for the existing Heritage Manager vacancy. Mr Marshall- Hardy is agreeable with this approach and has already made tentative preparations to present to Full Council at one of the aforementioned alternative meeting dates. Officers met on a preliminary basis with company representatives on 4 September & 24 October 2019 and the Heritage Managers undertook an accompanied field visit to various other similar projects on 13 November 2019, including Warwick Court House/ Tourism Centre

RESOLVED That the information was noted

251. COUNCIL ESTIMATES 2020/2021

To receive and consider:

- a) the recommendations of the Community and Amenities Committee upon the estimates pertinent to budgets within the control of that Committee [*see Minute No 233 Community and Amenities Committee 13 January 2020*]
- b) the recommendations of the Resources Committee for the setting of estimates for the financial year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and to set the preceptual request [*see Minute No's 240 & 241, Resources Committee 13 January 2020*]

The Town Clerk made reference to the estimates, budgets and precept setting documents circulated with the Agenda and reaffirmed that these had been recommended following full interpretation as part of the Community & Amenities and Resources Committee meetings from 13 January 2020. There were no further questions arising.

Councillor RJ Morris stated that he was disappointed that the perceptual increase was 6.85% and he would not wish to normally support such an increase. He added that he did acknowledge the financial pressures to enable provision and continuity of various community amenities and events including the Remembrance Sunday arrangements, Sunday Band Concerts programme and Mayflower 400 commemoration. Councillor RJ Morris also expressed the opinion that he did not agree with comparative data for precept to be referenced for Evesham and Pershore. (NB this information is sourced year on year from the public domain Wychavon District Council website).

RESOLVED

- To Approve and accept the recommendations of the Community and Amenities Committee upon the estimates pertinent to budgets within the control of that

Committee [see Minute No 233 Community and Amenities Committee 13 January 2020]

- To Approve and accept the recommendations of the Resources Committee for the setting of estimates for the financial year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and to set the preceptual request [see Minute No's 240 & 241, Resources Committee 13 January 2020]

- To Approve and accept the Precept Requirement 2020/2021 as follows, Estimated expenditure 2020/2021 = £497,930.

To be met from,

Precept £384,750

Community Grant £36,119

Other Income £88,373

Tax Base of 8490.34 and an increase of 6.85% results in a precept of £384,750.

Band D property increase of £2.24 on prior year per annum

252. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

1. Planning Committee – 13 January 2020
2. Resources Committee – 13 January 2020
3. Planning Committee - 13 January 2020

RESOLVED That the minutes of the listed Committee Meetings be approved and adopted.

253. TOWN COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Pursuant to the Interim Internal Auditor Visit which took place on 4 December 2019, the Council is required to review its Standing Orders & Financial Regulations annually. As previously reported following membership of Worcestershire CALC (County Association of Local Councils) from October 2019 the intention is to simultaneously consider adoption of the Model Financial Regulations published by NALC (National Association of Local Councils) prior to the end of the current Municipal Year. [NALC recommended Standing Orders & Financial Regulations circulated with Agenda for review and consideration].

The Town Clerk updated that the recommended NALC Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had been provided by and interpreted with the support of the Chief Officer from Worcestershire CALC including scrutiny against the existing DSTC Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to ensure consistency in all aspects. If adopted the NALC Standing Orders and Financial Regulations template will require characterisation for Droitwich Spa Town Council. This will then require formal commencement as part of the Agenda for the next scheduled Full Meeting of the Town Council on 20 April 2020.

RESOLVED That the recommended NALC Standing Orders & Financial Regulations be approved and adopted by the Droitwich Spa Town Council. That the NALC template be characterised and formally accepted at the next

scheduled meeting of the Full Town Council on 20 April 2020.

254. ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK

Pursuant to the Interim Internal Auditor Visit which took place on 4 December 2019, the Council is required to review all Risk prior to the end of each Municipal Year. The newly compiled Risk Register was reviewed by the Resources Committee on 14 October 2019 [*Minute Reference 161*]. This now requires formal review and adoption by Full Council [*Full Risk Assessment for all Town Council matters and business enclosed for review & consideration with Agenda*].

The Town Clerk updated that this information had already been presented and considered by the Resources Committee on 14 October 2019 – see minute reference 161. The Internal Auditor requests that the matter is also considered for approval by Full Council.

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the review of all risk presented be approved for the year 2019/20.

255. ANNUAL INSURANCE RENEWAL & REVIEW

Pursuant to the Interim Internal Auditor Visit which took place on 4 December 2019, the Council is required to review the Insurance provision annually at renewal. The policy schedule and levels of cover were considered by the Resources Committee on 9 December 2019 [*Minute Reference 203*]. This now requires formal review and adoption by Full Council [*Insurance renewal schedule attached for review & consideration with Agenda*].

The Town Clerk updated that this information had already been presented and considered by the Resources Committee on 9 December 2019 – see minute reference 203. The Internal Auditor requests that the matter is also considered for approval by Full Council.

RESOLVED That the review of insurance provision annually at renewal be approved as presented for the Year 2020/2021

256. INVESTMENT POLICY

Pursuant to the Interim Internal Auditor Visit which took place on 4 December 2019, the Council are recommended to put in place a suitable investment policy. A suggested policy was circulated for review & consideration. For connected matters the Council should also review its current arrangements & requirement for two unused and obsolete deposit accounts. [*Recommended investment policy attached for review & consideration with Agenda*].

The Town Clerk updated that if the policy was considered suitable for adoption, suitable short term deposit account options would be researched among Financial Providers and presented for further consideration at a forthcoming Resources Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED

- That the recommended Investment Policy be adopted by the Town Council.
- That the two obsolete Lloyds Bank Deposit Accounts be closed.

- That suitable short term investment options be researched among financial providers and presented for further consideration at a forthcoming meeting of the Resources Committee.

257. ELECTED MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

To consider adoption of the recommended revised Code to accord with arrangements throughout Worcestershire. This follows the review and report from January 2019 by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) into Local Government Ethical Standards. *[Explanatory email correspondence from District Monitoring Officer dated 20 December 2019 & Recommended Code of Conduct template attached with Agenda]*

RESOLVED That the recommended revised Elected Members Code of Conduct be adopted as presented. That confirmation be made to the District Monitoring Officer as stipulated.

258. MR EDGAR HARWOOD

To consider making arrangements to confer Honorary Alderman status on ex-Councillor Mr Edgar Harwood. The Council can bestow these honorary titles in recognition of distinguished contribution to Civic Life. On 12 January 2010 the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 came into being which amended the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 thereby enabling all local councils to confer honorary titles. These are conferred in accordance with Section 249 the Local Government Act 1972 (As Amended) and therefore will be by resolution of the Council, supported by two-thirds of those voting. The Council's adopted Protocol for such Appointments advises that these honours are to be given infrequently as many people provide good service both to the town and to the Council, they should be given to reward exceptional service. A suggested Ceremony date for further consideration is as a part of the Annual Council and Mayor Making Meeting scheduled for 11 May 2020. The motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED To confer the Title of Honorary Alderman on Ex Councillor Mr Edgar Harwood. The ceremony and reception are agreed to be a component Part of the Meeting of Annual Council scheduled for 11 May 2020.

259. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated on the following County Council matters.

- The successful set up of the wholly owned Council company – Worcestershire Children First taking day to day charge of around £100 million of Council spend and delivery of important priorities around Education and Children's Social Care.
- The Council redesign is taking shape with an agreed organisational structure and recruitment underway to fill the remaining top tier posts. Less noticeable,

but just as critical major investment in new ICT systems and software will support the efficient delivery of services, boost productivity and enable more mobile and flexible working.

- Working with partners, Worcestershire Local Industrial Strategy and 2040 plan will help set the future areas of focus for the County economy, support the revisions needed to district led Local Plans and complement our recently approved Worcestershire Transport Strategy. In health similar work is underway through the Integrated Care System (ICS) forum to better shape health and care services, although this is less developed.
- Under Open for Business a growing and successful local economy is vital for residents and businesses to prosper. It underpins the financial sustainability of this Council (WCC) too, through the contribution that new homes make to our tax base and the generation of increased revenue from Business Rates. That is why being “Open for Business” is a key priority for this Council (WCC).
- Worcestershire’s economy continues to perform well with our Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and wider business organisations driving forward our jointly agreed objectives set out in the Strategic Economic Plan to create 25,000 jobs, grow the economy by nearly one third (an extra £2.9bn Gross Value Added) and deliver 21,500 new homes by 2025. Excellent progress has been made with 31,000 new jobs added, an increase in GVA of £2bn and the building of 12,980 new homes to date- ensuring Worcestershire remains one of the fastest growing local economies in the country.
- The construction of Worcester Parkway is complete and now progressing through the rigorous rail industry “Entry into Service” and assurance processes. This is the first new station in Worcestershire for 100 years and will transform connectivity for rail users. The station will benefit from the new Cross Country and GWR timetable, the latter covering all GWR services across Western England and South Wales, representing the greatest change on the GWR network for over 30 years. Some key services to and from London will take less than 2 hours and passengers will be able to get to Cardiff in 1 hr 23 mins and to Nottingham in 1 hr 49 mins. Our clear ambition is to access even more services.
- The DfT confirmed the award of £54.5m for Phase 4 of the Southern Link Road last year. In terms of physical works, the construction of the new 1.9km road to the south of the current carriageway on the A4440 has progressed with construction of the flood compensation area, new embankment and road bridge foundations well underway.
- Our Energy from Waste plant, “EnviRecover” continues to perform well, allowing our contractor to apply for the relevant permissions to enable them to progress up to 15% more waste through the facility each year. Energy from the plant creates electricity for 32,000 homes. Also 44 volunteer “Lets Waste Less” community champions have been recruited working to spread the waste prevention message in their local communities.

Councillor RJ Morris updated on the following County Council matters,

- Apprenticeship week runs from 3rd February to 7th February 2020.
- A Skills Show takes place at Chateau Impney on 4th March 2020.
- Improvements to Westlands Roundabout (residents crossing) and a safer route to School pathway at Farmers Way are under assessment by Highways – no timings for the work are available.

- More pathways on Westlands will be replaced over the coming months (Woodman's and Shepherd's).
- The first Stakeholder meeting regarding Droitwich Spa railway station car park charging was held at WCC and the second is due soon. The Baxenden site development is seen as a key enabler on this and time is needed for plans to come forward.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

260. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

In the absence of Councillor AM Sinton, the following Wychavon District Council matters were reported on by Councillor G Duffy.

- St Peters Field New Homes Bonus application for £40k was represented at Wychavon on 20 January 2020 by the Town Clerk and a delegation from the St Peters Field Sports Association. Positively the application was unanimously supported for recommendation to the Executive Board and a final decision is anticipated soon.
- For the Community Legacy Scheme there are approximately £2 Million unallocated funds. From the application received, 14 have been shortlisted for consideration on 24 February, including the High School Cabin Project. This application was worked on by DSTC from May 2019 and submitted during November 2019. Councillor Sinton is now a member of the WDC Committee- Communities & Funding Advisory Panel.
- Mr Jack Hegarty- The Wychavon District Council – Managing Director retires from July 2020.
- The recent WDC resident's survey results are now available on line.
- The WDC social mobility grants are now available to apply for. Details have been circulated by the Town Clerk and the timeframe closes on 1st February 2020.
- There is a "Droitwich Matters" meeting scheduled at WDC on 5 February 2020. Councillor Sinton will update more information afterwards.
- Most information on any of these initiatives is available through the WDC website and is in the public domain.

Councillor RJ Morris reported on the following Wychavon District Council matters.

- The Police and Crime Commissioners drop in Questions and Answers session takes place at the Community Hall between 5pm and 7pm on Tuesday 3rd February 2020. Members were asked to share this information and encourage constituents to attend. Any related questions can be raised including on issues such as speeding and anti- social behaviour in the community.
- Droitwich South East District Councillors will be holding a public meeting on 25th February 2020 between 7pm and 9pm at the Sacred Heart Church Hall. The topic is "supporting an increased population". Representations are anticipated from Wychavon District Council, Worcestershire County Council, Health, Police, Social Care and Fortis Housing.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

261. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £ 1592.59 together with Supplementary Payments totalling £3,659.14.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £ 5,251.73 (£1592.59+ £3,659.14) as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

262. TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press by passing the following motion:

“That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters”.

RESOLVED To exclude the Public and Press by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.

263. STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS – HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM

The Town Clerk updated that pursuant to minute reference 220 of the meeting of Full Council held on 16 December 2019 the vacancy for Heritage Manager had been advertised. The role has been posted within the agreed salary range SCP 5 - 6. Applications are requested up until the closing date of 4pm on Friday 14 February 2020, with shortlisting for interviews to take place on 21 February 2020. The usual advertising mediums have been used for the vacancy notice including the Droitwich Standard Newspaper, West Midlands Jobs website, West Midlands Museum’s website, Visit Droitwich Spa and the Town Council websites, posters and connected social media.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

The meeting ended at 6.48 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
20 April 2020

